

Phoenix/Maricopa County Continuum of Care Priority Community Technical Assistance Plan

As part of HUD's initial 9 Priority Community/CoC Check-up Process, the Phoenix/Maricopa County CoC completed the CoC Check-up in Spring 2011. With the assistance of a TA Provider (The Collaborative Partnership), the CoC drafted a Community CoC Action Plan during the summer of 2011.

Priority observations from that process include:

The CoC does not act as a coordinated "system." Client access to services and housing seems to be only dependent on where the client happens to end up – there is a lack of triage, assessing of what programs are going to be best for what population, and targeted referring to an appropriate agency. It seems that clients just have to try a few provider doors before finding a program that could fit his or her needs and accept his/her eligibility. Once a client is "in", there is confusion about navigating the system and providing clients linkages to appropriate housing and services among outreach and shelter providers.

There is a targeting issue around transitional housing and whether it is serving the appropriate people. Transitional housing providers are feeling pressure to meet the HUD national outcome goals/other funding goals, so some have created fairly rigid eligibility criteria that screens out the harder to serve population. Therefore, this service-rich resource is sometimes used to serve easier to serve clients. However, even after serving higher functioning clients, some transitional housing providers aren't meeting the HUD national goals. So, the question for the system as a whole is: what/who should TH be used for?

In addition, there was some concern over how the CoC governing body functions. Homeless service providers sometimes feel that they don't have a voice in the CoC governing body, that the governing body isn't paying attention to the issues that the providers want to highlight and when they do have an issue, providers are not sure how to bring it up to the CoC. Finally, service providers felt they could use more information about Fair Housing issues.

TA Need #1: Support in developing a coordinated or centralized intake/ assessment/ referral/resource targeting system to ensure the best use of resources and most effective outcomes for the most appropriate populations.

Desired Outcome #1: A coordinated/centralized intake/assessment process will increase the likelihood that families and individuals will be served by the right intervention more quickly. Each system entry point will use the same assessment tool and make decisions on which programs families and individuals are referred to based on a comprehensive understanding of each program's specific requirements, target

population, and available beds and services. This approach considers the specific housing barriers of each client and provides an intentional and rational referral to the program type that best fits the client's housing needs.

TA Need #2: Clarify the role of transitional housing in the CoC, and develop a plan for strengthening the performance, and perceived performance, of transitional housing programs. Address the reality or perception that as a result of restrictive enrollment criteria, individuals and family households that could benefit from transitional housing are being excluded. Through the use of coordinated or centralized assessment system, ensure that appropriate households are referred to programs, and more fully utilize program beds/resources.

Desired Outcome #2: Transitional Housing will target populations that will benefit most from the service-rich environment that transitional housing provides. Transitional housing programs will thus more efficiently serve individuals and families.

TA Need #3: Create incremental enhancements to the structure of the planning and decision-making arms of the CoC to increase inclusiveness and responsiveness to the needs and concerns of the full range of stakeholders. Deliver a Fair Housing training.

Desired Outcome #3: CoC governing body will be more responsive to stakeholder needs and concerns. CoC will be more knowledgeable about Fair Housing issues.